

Research Strategy

2023–2028



Contents

- 02 Executive Summary
- 04 Introduction
- 06 Our Research Vision
- 07 Our Research Principles
- 08 Our Strategic Pillars
- 10 Our Action Plan
- 18 Research Strategy

Research Strategy Executive Summary

Driven by our mission to improve the health and well-being of our community, Monash Health is a leading academic health service at the forefront of research and innovation. Amongst its highest priorities for clinical and organisational excellence, this five-year Research Strategy has been placed as a top order priority for delivery in 2023. This status recognises the value that an embedded research culture brings as a way to deliver the most effective care in the most efficient and appropriate ways.

Our Research Vision

We foster clinical curiosity to drive research and innovation that enhances the health of our community.

Our Key Principles

Our Research Strategy is guided by three core principles:

01 Innovation Leadership

We pursue excellence in research and translate discoveries into impactful innovations that result in improved health outcomes.

02 Curiosity-Driven Culture

We promote a research active culture across all professions, providing the environment and resources for excellence.

03 Consumer-Centric Approach

We engage with consumers to address community needs, ensuring equitable access and participation.

Our Strategic Pillars

Our strategy centres around four pillars:



01 People

Focus on workforce, consumer and community engagement.



02 Profile

Enhance our brand and visibility.



03 Platforms

Support research infrastructure and accessibility.



04 Precinct

Foster a vibrant research community on our campuses.

Our Action Plan

To achieve our goals, we will:

- › Embed research into daily operations, encouraging all departments to participate.
- › Partner with consumers, ensuring research aligns with their needs and actively involving them in the process.
- › Develop our workforce, define clear research career paths and provide necessary support.
- › Promote research through a coordinated communication strategy and the development of a unified brand.
- › Promote research services and facilities, removing barriers to collaboration.
- › Make research participation a standard option for all patients.
- › Provide centralised support for research to build capacity across the organisation.
- › Expand clinical trial capacity and decentralise delivery.
- › Encourage collaboration and partnering to bring the Monash precinct to life.

Monash Health's Research Strategy is dedicated to fostering a culture of research that cements our role as a leading academic health service and allows us to provide our community with the best possible care.

Introduction

Monash Health is committed to excellence in clinical care, education, and research. We recognise that the landscape of health care is constantly evolving, marked by new discoveries, technologies, and changing patient and community needs.

As a leading academic health service, it is imperative that we continue to advance knowledge, discover effective ways to prevent and treat diseases, and improve the health of the community.

Despite many remarkable advances in clinical care, evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness is often insufficient, particularly in terms of health outcomes and relative costs of treatment. Research, and an embedded culture that empowers clinicians to challenge existing ways of delivering care and explore new scientific hypotheses, are known to deliver improved standards of care and bolster efficiencies. Similarly, the health services where clinicians use research to improve standards are known as the places that offer the best patient care and the best career pathways for their workforce.

Monash Health is already demonstrating its leadership in numerous disciplines and fields of research. It has a growing number of exceptional clinician-researchers who are inspiring junior clinicians to embark on productive research careers at Monash Health. To this end, Monash Health is committed to supporting best practice across all fields of research, while also striving to be a global leader in its areas of priority. These leading priority areas for research are currently being confirmed as a part of the health service's new Strategic

Plan and will, at a minimum, include those areas of priority already established through the previous Strategic Plan 2023:

- > Maternity research
- > Newborn research
- > Cardiovascular research
- > Cancer and blood disorder research
- > Stroke and neuroscience research
- > Immune mediated inflammation research
- > Mental health research

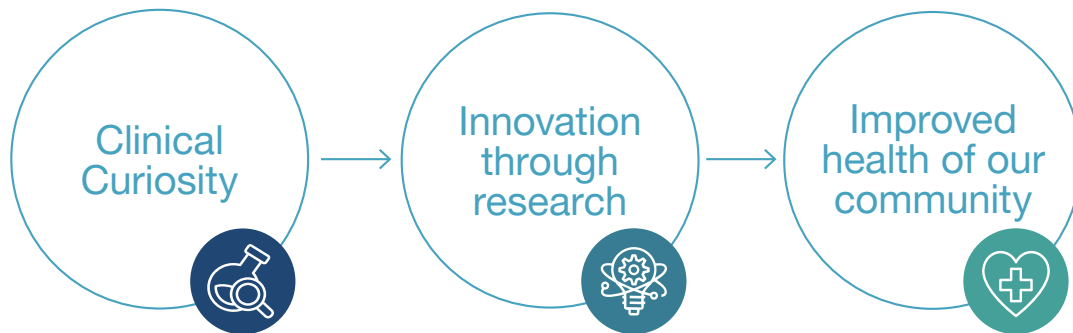
Monash Health's Research Strategy, to be delivered between 2023 and 2028, is an ambitious five-year strategy that aims to build capacity, foster a culture of research, and establish a strong brand that is synonymous with research excellence.

Importantly, the strategy has been developed and will be implemented together with our campus partners, particularly Monash University and the Hudson Institute of Medical Research. Uniquely to Monash Health and its partners, we integrate research capabilities spanning the entire human life cycle from prenatal care and neonatology through to gerontology and end-of-life care. Our research takes clinical curiosity from bedside to bench and back to the bedside where it can provide the most benefit for our patients and community.



Our Research Vision

We cultivate clinical curiosity to drive research and innovation that improves the health of our community



As a leading academic health service with a growing reputation for the scale and quality of its research activity, Monash Health wants to be known for research discovery, translation and impact. Implicit in this is the requirement for an embedded research culture that catalyses creative problem solving and empowers clinicians to explore research questions that allow them to provide better care for their patients and the community.

This process of discovery, translation and impact can be illustrated as a continuum that starts with clinical curiosity – wanting to understand and solve problems related

to patient care – and leads into a process of research and discovery, and ultimately, an innovative solution or new way of delivering care. Monash Health's research strives to improve the health of the community in areas where it is most aligned to the community's needs, so that it inspires long-term consumer partnerships, and demonstrates the full benefits that applied research brings. The continuum will become a virtuous cycle that helps clinicians to routinely provide superior care for their patients in the places where it will provide the greatest benefits. At an organisational level, the virtuous cycle is the culture of clinical curiosity and innovation.



Our Research Principles

To underpin achievement of Monash Health's Research Vision, three Research Principles have been devised to help guide the organisation.

We work seamlessly with our campus partners, Monash University and the Hudson Institute of Medical Research, and other collaborators to:

- › Lead in healthcare innovation, creating positive health impact through research and discovery, translation and implementation
 - › Promote a curiosity-driven culture that encourages research across all professions and disciplines, and provides the environment and resources to enable researchers to excel
 - › Partner with consumers to drive a research agenda that is based on community needs, offers equitable access to participants, and inspires consumer participation at all levels
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The three Research Principles focus on different domains, each of which plays a critical role in Monash Health's ability to achieve its Research Vision: Leadership for impact, Research active culture, and Consumer driven.



Our Strategic Pillars



01 People

Focus on workforce, consumer and community engagement.



02 Profile

Enhance our brand and research visibility.



03 Platforms

Support research infrastructure and accessibility.



04 Precinct

Foster a vibrant research community on our campuses.

Each of the four Strategic Pillars define Monash Health's Research Strategy and help to strengthen its implementation, prioritise actions and leverage essential resources. These are:

People – our employees and the communities we serve;

Profile – how we present ourselves and our research achievements;

Platforms – the soft and hard infrastructure that supports research excellence and make it easy to be research active; and

Precinct – buildings, partnerships and the research-driven community that bring our campuses to life.



Our Action Plan

01 People



Outcomes and Actions

We strive to embed research into our daily work

By integrating research into all of our work and into everything we do, the gap between clinical and research activities will reduce. This can be done by encouraging all departments to get involved in research, by setting department-level goals for research engagement, and by facilitating delivery of active research programs with measurable benefits and outcomes.

Activities will include:

- › Making research, including health services research and health professions education research, a core feature and expectation of working at Monash Health;
- › Measuring research outcomes and successes to demonstrate impact and social benefit;
- › Supporting business unit-level research work plans with a designated lead or 'champion';
- › Providing protected time for research in line with unit-level research work plans; and
- › Monitoring research performance at business unit and program levels through a co-developed Research Scorecard.

We partner with our consumers to drive a research agenda that makes a difference

Our consumers and the communities we serve are our most important stakeholders. It is essential that our research programs are consumer-driven. Not just so the care we provide is patient centred, but to also inspire consumer participation in our research studies. Through consumer partnerships and

increased awareness, clinical research will be able to play a greater role in addressing the health inequities that affect minority groups, including our Aboriginal and migrant communities.

Activities will include:

- › Engaging with consumers and consumer groups to ensure our research priorities address consumer needs;
- › Involving consumers in all governance and research planning groups; and
- › Actively seeking and acting on feedback from the experience of consumers participating in research.

We invest in the development of our people

Our people are our greatest assets. By establishing a supportive ecosystem that provides career options and leadership to help researchers navigate through career stages, Monash Health's research capacity and reputation will continue to flourish. Combining both top-down and bottom-up approaches to embed research into all our activity requires strong leadership that encourages our employees to be research active while they apply that research to improve the services we provide. Similarly, by creating career pathways that have a clear research focus and assisting researchers to develop the required skills and track record they will be incentivised to establish their own research credentials, attract funding and become autonomous.

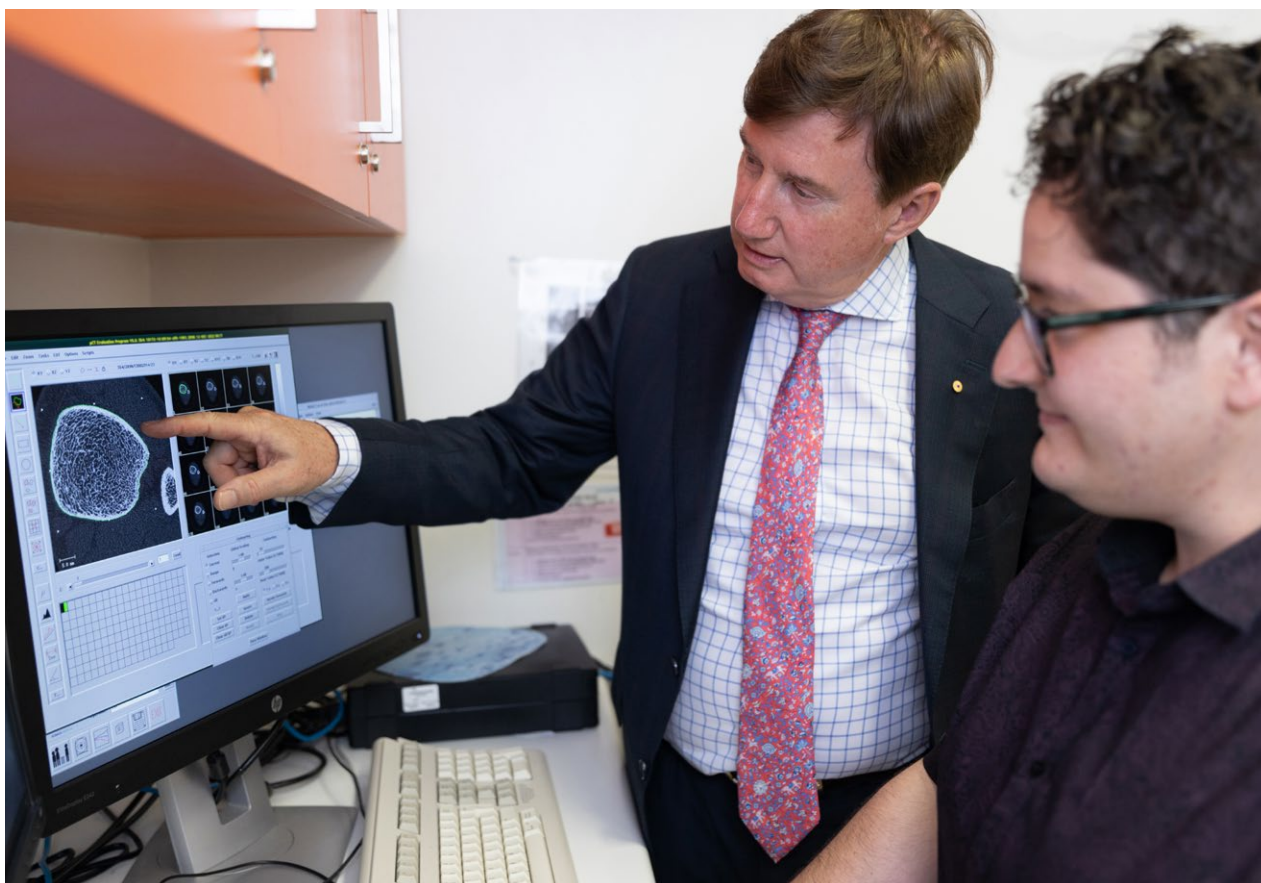
Activities will include:

- › Engaging research leaders and celebrating their achievements;
- › Defining career paths for research, especially for new and emerging researchers;

- › Leveraging partner opportunities for capacity building in priority areas, including community involvement and implementation science;
- › Identifying and providing funding support to bridge career stages for clinical and non-clinical researchers;
- › Promoting access to research support services in all departments; and
- › Creating training opportunities to build research know-how and capacity
 - Research methodology, grant writing, statistical analysis, ethics
 - secondments, mentoring, applied project work

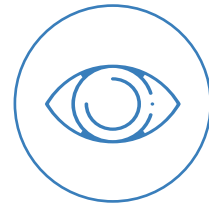
What will success look like?

- › Monash Health is the workplace of choice for people seeking a rich research career.
 - › Our patients and communities partner with us for the latest treatment options.
 - › Our research programs and partnerships demonstrably deliver better health outcomes for our community.
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Our Action Plan

02 Profile



Outcomes and Actions

We deliver a coordinated communication strategy and plan for research

Monash Health's research activity continues to grow year on year. Our achievements need to be communicated internally and externally, so that all of our people are Monash Health proud, and so that our communities and stakeholders recognise Monash Health as the leading academic health service that it is. Together with our campus partners, Monash University and the Hudson Institute of Medical Research, our combined stories of success and research excellence will be amplified to the world.

Activities will include:

- › Raising the profile of our priority research themes to improve awareness of our strengths;
- › Measuring and promoting consumers' research experiences to let consumers know they are critical partners in our research;
- › Extending networks and channels to disseminate research outputs that showcase the value, outcomes and benefits of our research;
- › Removing inter-entity obstacles to promote research achievements;
- › Using the Research Scorecard to measure and demonstrate the performance and impact of our research;
- › Improving our web and social media presence to boost awareness of our strengths, raise the profiles of our researchers, and celebrate our achievements.

We have a defining and unified brand for our research

Positioning Monash Health as a leading, research intensive, academic health service requires greater awareness of the immense scale and outstanding quality of research underway. This awareness, as it is built within our organisation, throughout our communities and spread further afield, must be inextricably associated with the scientific and medical breakthroughs that take place, the outstanding researchers who are passionate about finding better ways to deliver care, and with the exceptional outcomes that our patients benefit from.

Activities will include:

- › Highlighting the interrelationship between 'People' and 'Profile' to emphasise that "our People are our Profile";
- › Making research visible at the front door and across all facilities;
- › Leveraging the collective strength of our partnerships to build a brand around our priority themes and our common purpose;
- › Coordinating the three partners to operate and grow in an interconnected way to leverage research funding, access to data, human research ethics and governance submissions, strategic communications, and IT systems;
- › Ensuring our own structures/ departments are aligned in terms of research objectives and supporting infrastructure;
- › Facilitating collaboration by helping researchers navigate organisational structures.

We promote our services and facilities that enable research

Within Monash Health’s own capabilities, and with the support of our partners, there are a wealth of services and facilities available to support and enable research – from our Research Support Services team which ensures the appropriate conduct of all research underway, to internal departments such as diagnostic imaging, pharmacy, and pathology, each of which has their own active research programs and plays an essential role in supporting others, through to the Business Intelligence, Health Information Services, and Electronic Medical Record teams which all provide invaluable data extraction and analysis services, the Library which provides researcher training and support such as systematic reviews, the Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation (MCHRI) biostatistical and implementation science consulting service, and again to the technology platforms operated by the Hudson Institute and Monash University, which provide a range of specialist technologies such as single cell genomics and molecular analysis, cell handling, and micro imaging.

These are only a few of the facilities and services available to support research excellence, which can play a valuable role in the development and planning of research studies. However, many of these teams are not well known, not optimally utilised and would benefit from additional promotion.

Activities will include:

- › Remove intra-organisation barriers to streamline partnering with supporting departments and services;
- › Promote facilities and services to attract industry and research partners, including study sponsors.

What will success look like?

- › Our workforce embraces curiosity and are known as pioneers in healthcare innovation
 - › Our brand awareness increases and we are recognised as world leading in key priority areas
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Our Action Plan

03 Platforms



Outcomes and Actions

Make research participation the standard

As a research-intensive academic health service, consumers should know as they step through the front door that they can be a part of cutting-edge research. From contribution of their health data and biospecimens, through to recruitment into clinical trials, they are integral partners in research and Monash Health's ability to continue providing its community with the best health care possible.

Activities will include:

- > Introducing 'front-door' consent for all patents;
- > Expanding current and creating new clinical registries and real-world data collections; and
- > Contributing all appropriate biospecimens for banking within Biobanking Victoria.

Provide centralised support for research

Centralised resources and training opportunities help researchers get studies started and will build capacity for research across the health service, particularly in developing departments. While many supporting services already exist both internally and through our partnerships, some are underutilised. However, by providing a visible 'front door', researchers looking for support will be able to locate and access valuable resources to build skills and get their studies underway.

Activities will include:

- > Improving visibility of resources available to support researchers;
- > Providing centralised access to research staff, budgeting tools, and other support mechanisms provided

by Monash Health or its partners;

- > Improving access and coordination with supporting departments, such as pharmacy, imaging and pathology;
- > Building research know-how and capacity, including education and training opportunities for researchers and their support teams and access to workshops and other resources on topics like grant writing, statistics, ethics, research methodologies, and understanding and identifying funding opportunities.

Data Platforms

Data is at the heart of all research and quality improvement. It is an essential commodity that, if leveraged strategically, has the potential to transform health care as we know it. With data being collected from numerous sources across the health service and managed by different teams, it is essential to consider how researchers access it, how it is governed, the tools and systems available to analyse it, and the resources available to prepare and extract the data sets that are requested. Managing data strategically is essential and can add significant value for Monash Health, both for internal researchers and for external partnerships and collaborations.

Activities will include:

- > Developing a clinical data strategy for research that ensures:
 - Well-governed, secure access to data sources, including EMR;
 - Analysis tools, such as AI for patient linkage;
 - Analyst staffing to support data extraction and analysis;
 - Data science capabilities, either in-house or through partnerships.

Expand capacity for clinical trials

The term research is broad and all encompassing. However, translational research for drugs and medical devices often requires a dedicated clinical trials centre where specialised teams follow strict protocols to ensure the safe and effective testing of experimental therapies. Despite having dedicated clinical trials centres at Monash Medical Centre Clayton, the Monash Children's Hospital and the Victorian Heart Hospital, the capacity to take on additional trials, particularly in oncology and haematology, is limited. Furthermore, to improve equity and make clinical trials more accessible for a larger pool of eligible patients, establishing additional flexible modes of delivery that allow trials to be delivered away from our dedicated centres, either in a patient's home or at an alternative location, would add significant value for patients, clinical departments, and the organisation more broadly.

Activities will include:

- › Optimising current usage of clinical trials facilities to increase their capacity;
- › Exploring options for additional trials centres at Casey and Moorabbin Hospitals to expand capacity and better serve our extended communities, including through the Southeast and Gippsland; and
- › Developing capacity for decentralised clinical trials using teletrials and trials in the home.

Leverage campus partnerships to access enabling technology platforms

A great deal of medical research relies on specialised technology for analytic processes such as DNA sequencing,

chemical analysis, cell sorting and manipulation, chromatography and microscopy. Similarly, advanced computing and digital capabilities are essential for analysis of patient data generated through our data platforms. All these technologies are amongst those that are available to Monash Health researchers through our campus partners, the Hudson Institute of Medical Research and Monash University. By extending our existing relationships to improve access to these valuable technology platforms, Monash Health researchers will also benefit from strong local networks and improved collaborations with leading researchers.

Activities will include:

- › Facilitating networking and awareness of facilities available and expert collaborations, including for cell therapies, genomics, proteomics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and informatics.

What will success look like?

- › Our researchers have the resources and tools available to reduce the administrative burden of research.
 - › Our consumers know research is a care option and find participation accessible.
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Our Action Plan

04 Precinct



Outcomes and Actions

Develop funding strategy to support the research ecosystem

Development of a research-intensive ecosystem requires strategic funding for staff positions, research training, project support and product development. Particularly at early and mid-career stages, accessing funding to backfill clinical roles and encourage participation in research is essential. While Monash Health already supports an annual emerging researcher fellowship program, the drive to create a culture that inspires research as a core component of all clinical and non-clinical departments, will require a broader strategy that creates new streams of funding and provides essential support for our research community.

Activities will include:

- › Establishing new opportunities for fundraising and philanthropy to establish a funding base that can support research studies and career growth;
- › Continuing to develop opportunities for joint positions and partner contributions that can attract and retain key research talent; and
- › Building industry partnerships that can drive the commercial and community relevance of our research.

Incorporate research infrastructure as a key element of the capital strategy

New capital developments are scheduled for several Monash Health campuses. Similarly, future planning efforts identify numerous new developments that will transform Monash Health, particularly at its Clayton site, into a thriving health research precinct that co-locates public and private clinical facilities with significant industry presence.

Planning to create the precinct will be incremental over many years and will depend on investment – both public and private – but it must consider research and its requirements so that dedicated space for research becomes a centralised feature of any new development.

Activities will include:

- › Engaging with government, philanthropy and internal capital planning teams to ensure research is a primary consideration in any planning for new capital development; and
- › Engaging with Monash University and the Hudson Institute whenever new capital works are planned, to ensure opportunities for integration of space for research and collaboration are maximised.

Promote inter- and intra-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration at all levels

The future of research, whether in a health service or elsewhere relies on collaboration, and particularly interdisciplinary collaborations, which bring different ways of thinking together – not just between Monash Health departments, but also with campus partners at The Hudson Institute and Monash University.

By bringing people together and allowing them to discuss their research opportunities and challenges, a greater awareness of research interests will become apparent and a range of new networks with opportunities for collaborations will emerge.

Activities will include:

- › Making knowledge about the precinct more accessible to everyone, raising awareness and understanding of how to work among partners;

- › Sharing challenges, resources, and funding opportunities to promote collaboration; and
- › Holding combined events and promotions to encourage and support an engaged community.

Bring the Monash precinct to life

The core of innovation lies in collaboration and partnership. Breaking down silos will allow talented clinicians, researchers and industry partners to engage, discuss their most pressing issues, and devise new solutions. These interactions underpin a creative and lively environment that fosters new research projects, allows researchers to find solutions to current clinical problems, and encourages them to be a part of a thriving, productive, and research intensive environment.

Activities will include:

- › Strengthening linkages with local research and industry partners – schools and faculties, Synchrotron, MIME, Eastern Innovation, start-ups, etc;
- › Defining the interface between partners to support collaboration and communication;

- Create pathways and facilitate opportunities for researchers to connect (leadership, events, intranet profiles, etc);
- Establish interconnected systems
- Encourage secondments and joint projects with precinct partners;
- Simplify administrative requirements to facilitate research;
- Develop opportunities for ongoing collaboration in areas like biobanking and data sharing.
- › Running events to encourage and advance research and innovation
 - Seminars and networking, pitch contests, show and tell, etc.

What will success look like?

- › Our campuses are home to a thriving, research community.
 - › Collaborators and industry seek us out as preferred partners.
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Research Strategy on a Page

VISION

We cultivate clinical curiosity to drive research and innovation that improves the health of our community

PILLARS

People



Profile



Platforms



Precinct



STRATEGY

Research culture, career pathways, workforce development, staffing models, consumer & community engagement

Communicate capabilities, strengthen research brand, improve self awareness, make research visible

Consent models, clinical data and analytics, trials capacity, virtual facilities

New capital development, campus partners, share opportunities and resources, engage industry

OBJECTIVE

Embed research into our daily work

- Make research core from Day 1
- Measure research successes for impact and social benefit
- Monitor research performance at business unit level through a co-developed Research Scorecard

Partner with our consumers, their carers and the communities we serve

- Actively seek and act on feedback from the experience of consumers participating in research

Invest in our people

- Engage and celebrate research leaders
- Define career paths, especially for new and emerging researchers
- Identify and provide funding support to bridge career stages for clinical and non-clinical researchers

Develop a coordinated communication strategy and plan for research

- Celebrate our successes and achievements
- Showcase the value, outcomes and benefits of research

Create a defining and unified brand for our research

- Highlight the interrelationship between our 'People' and our 'Profile' – "our People are our Profile"
- Leverage the collective strength of our partnership to build a brand around our themes and common purpose
- Coordinate partners to operate and grow in a uniform and interconnected way

Lead international partnerships and researcher exchange

Make research participation the standard

- 'Opt-out' consent, including prospective use

Provide centralised support for research

- Access to skilled research personnel, budgeting tools, etc
- Access to supporting departments – pathology, imaging
- Workshops and resources on grant writing, statistics, ethics, methodologies, etc

Data Platforms

- Develop a clinical data strategy for research
- Well-governed, secure access to data, incl EMR
- Analysis tools, such as AI patient linkage

Expand capacity for clinical trials

- Optimise current usage of clinical trials facilities
- Develop capacity for remote or decentralised clinical trials

Leverage campus partnerships to access enabling technology platforms

Develop funding strategy to support the research ecosystem

- Fundraising and philanthropy to establish a funding base for research studies and career growth
- Industry partnerships to drive the commercial and community relevance of our research

Incorporate research infrastructure as a key element of the capital strategy

Promote inter- and intra-departmental and interdisciplinary collaboration at all levels

- Share solutions, resources, funding opportunities

Bring the Monash precinct to life

- Simplify administrative requirements for research
- Run events and research competitions to encourage and advance innovation